



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# JUNE 18 WAS PROCLAIMED "DENNIS O. BRENDEN DAY" IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Governor Dugaard proclaimed June 18th as "Dennis O. Brenden Day" in South Dakota.

In his proclamation, the Governor recognized Denny's service in the United States Marines and his tour of duty in Vietnam. Brenden was also honored for his leadership, legislative advocacy, partnership building, embracing technology as a means to reach younger veterans, and his dedication and commitment to South Dakota's veterans.



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In his commitment to South Dakota's veterans, Adjutant Brenden embraced and fostered the four pillars of the American Legion by promoting patriotism, national defense, veterans rehabilitation and our children and youth.

"Denny is THE EXAMPLE of Veteran," said SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman. "His time as a War-Time Marine, molded him into a father, husband, and hero that the American Legion is very privileged to have had. We are very proud of him and his service to this country and state!"



## CHANGE OF COMMAND AT AMERICAN LEGION

Members of the South Dakota American Legion Posts and Auxiliaries gathered in Watertown last week for their annual convention. Members elected the following new leaders:

Hugh Holmes of Mitchell, State Commander  
Denny Brenden of Watertown, State Vice Commander  
Fred Nelson of Spearfish, State Vice Commander  
Jim Huls of Madison, National Executive Committeeman  
Terry Hanson of Arlington, Alternate National Executive Committeeman  
Travise Flisrand of Castlewood, Department Adjutant  
Mark Abraham of Watertown, Assistant State Adjutant  
Verle Whipple of Clear Lake, Department Sergeant-at-Arms

In his remarks at the convention, Governor Dugaard noted that "we have all said these words hundreds of times—" *I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.* "> But you, the men and women who have responded to their nation's call have done more than pledge your allegiance, you have given it. To gain that which is worth having, you risked losing everything else. You risked your careers, your relationships..... your very lives. All that we have here in America today, which our Declaration of Independence proclaimed years ago, which our Bill of Rights guarantees to us. You risked losing everything else, to protect all these things. We are grateful, we are proud, and we are with you in spirit and in heart. You are South Dakota's finest, and we are grateful for your sacrifice and your service."

Immediately following this presentation, Governor Dugaard also addressed the American Legion Auxiliary.

Brad Richardson, superintendent of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, gave an update on the new home and thanked the American Legion Posts and Auxiliaries for their on-going support of our Home and our heroes.

SDDVA's Erin Bultje provided the Legionnaires and Auxiliary members with an update on the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. She thanked the American Legion and its partners. She noted, "You have been great partners with us to be the voice for South Dakota's veterans and to advocate for and provide the pathway for all veterans and their families."

SDDVA's Jeri Smith was also present at the convention and visited with attendees on the military funeral honors stipend program.





## CHANGES WITHIN OUR SDDVA NETWORK

Caitlyn Zylstra has accepted a full time position with the Air Guard and has departed from her role with SDDVA. We wish Caitlyn the best in her new venture and thank her for her dedication in enhancing the lives of our veterans.

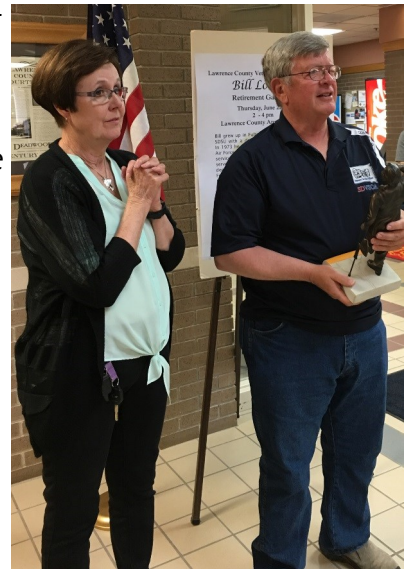
Erin Bultje will be wearing two SDDVA hats! She will continue her role as a state veterans service officer and she will serve as the Executive Director of South Dakota Joining Forces.

Joseph Leasure has been promoted to a state veterans service officer and he will be taking over Caitlyn's previous workload.

Katherine Richardson, a veteran who served 13 years in the Marine Corps, will join the SDDVA team on June 26 as state veterans service officer.

The SDDVA team is in the process of hiring an additional claims examiner.

On the County side of our network, Bill Locken, veterans service officer for Lawrence County has decided that it's time to retire and enjoy time with his family and improve his golf game! Friends gathered in Deadwood this week to wish Bill the best in his retirement. Bill has served as the Lawrence County VSO since March of 1996. Serving at the Governor's request, Bill also served on the South Dakota's Veterans Commission from 2001-2012.



Jesse Ketzer has been named the new Lawrence County VSO. His email address is: [jketzer@lawrence.sd.us](mailto:jketzer@lawrence.sd.us).

Also, Ken Irwin has decided that this retirement thing looks pretty good and retired effective June 23 as the Custer County VSO. Ken has served in his role as CVSO since 2007. Ken's replacement is Jana Virtue. Her email is [jvirtue@custercountysd.com](mailto:jvirtue@custercountysd.com)

## HOLMES BUYS AL GULF WAR PRINT

Newly-elected American Legion State Commander Hugh Holmes bought the John Green Gulf War print at the American Legion's fun auction.

The American Legion has commissioned John Green to do five prints and Hugh has bought all four that have been auctioned at this time. Funds raised from the auction go to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation.



# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS DAY IN SOUTH DAKOTA

At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed June 27, 2017, as "Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day in South Dakota." It is a day to reflect on the causes, symptoms and treatment of post-traumatic stress injuries.

"The brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who proudly serve the United States and risk their lives to protect our freedom deserve the investment of every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being," the Governor's proclamation states.

"It is important that we ensure our heroes embrace their invisible wounds in a timely, confident manner, ultimately saving lives and preserving families," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "They have injuries we cannot visualize, but are deeply felt by our heroes that have returned home. Be vigilant in your watch of these great men and women and be ready to fight for their freedoms of this deep pain from their service."

Zimmerman is encouraging everyone to help raise PTSD awareness. "Awareness of PTSD can be divided into three themes," said Zimmerman.

"Learn, connect and share. Take the mystery out of PTSD by learning more about the invisible wounds and the treatments that are available. Reach out to someone and give support. Help spread the word. Working together we can make a difference."

## Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota  
Office of the Governor

*Whereas*, The brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who proudly serve the United States and risk their lives to protect our freedom; deserve the investment of every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being; and,

*Whereas*, Combat operational stress has historically been viewed as a mental illness caused by a pre-existing flaw of character and/or ability; and the term Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) carries a stigma that perpetuates this misconception; and,

*Whereas*, Post-traumatic stress can occur not only after a traumatic event experienced in combat, but also rape, sexual assault, battery, torture, confinement, child abuse, car accidents, train wrecks, plane crashes, bombings, and/or natural disasters; and,

*Whereas*, Referring to the complications from post-traumatic stress as a disorder perpetuates the stigma of and bias against mental illness, and this stigma discourages those suffering from post-traumatic stress from seeking proper and timely medical treatment; and,

*Whereas*, Making the condition less stigmatizing and more honorable can favorably influence those affected, encourage them to seek timely treatment help without fear of retribution or shame, and diminish suicide rates; and,

*Whereas*, All citizens suffering from post-traumatic stress injury deserve our consideration, those who have received these wounds in service to our nation further deserve our respect and recognition:

*Now, Therefore, I, Dennis Daugaard*, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim June 27, 2017, as

## POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS DAY

in South Dakota, and encourage our Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Health, and Department of the Military to continue working to educate service members, veterans, the families of service members and veterans, victims of abuse, crime and natural disaster, and the general public about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of post-traumatic stress injury.



*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Fifth Day of June in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Seventeen.

*Dennis Daugaard*  
Dennis Daugaard, Governor

Attest:

*Shantel Krebs*  
Shantel Krebs, Secretary of State



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

North Central Chapter



Pre-Registration

**3rd Annual PVA Poker Run**

Saturday, July 22, 2017

Thirsty Duck Bar &amp; Grill, 945 S. Marion Rd, Sioux Falls

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Passenger: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Fee: \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Single \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Couple

Rider Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form along with  
payment to:

PVA North Central Chapter

209 N. Garfield Ave

Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Shirt Size for each  
registered participant:

S M L XL XX XXX

REGISTRATION: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

1st Place \$500.00 2nd Place \$250.00 3rd Place \$100.00

Start: Thirsty Duck

Stops: J&L Harley Davidson-Sioux Falls; Big Urns-Colton, SD; Shipwreck Bar & Grill-Chester, SD;  
Steve's Bar & Grill-Trent, SD; Norby's-Dell Rapids, SD; Safari Bar & Grill-Renner, SD.

End-Thirsty Duck.

Prizes, Food, Beverages, Music, 50/50 Raffle will be provided during the event. After Ride Party/  
Prizes – 4:30 PM

For more information call: PVA North Central Chapter at 605-336-0494

# Employment Workshop

presented by



**SANFORD**  
HEALTH



## U.S. Military Members, Veterans and Spouses:

Click to register for this free Employment Workshop presented by Hire Heroes USA and Sanford Health. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your job search skills and speak directly with Sanford Health hiring authorities.

 [hhusasiouxfallsjuly2017.eventbrite.com](https://hhusasiouxfallsjuly2017.eventbrite.com)

Strategic Planning  
Resume Building  
Networking/LinkedIn  
Interview Preparation



**Wednesday**  
**July 12, 2017**



**8:00am - 4:00pm**



**Sanford Health**  
2200 E. Benson Road  
Building B  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104



**Business  
Casual Attire**



**Breakfast and  
Lunch Provided**





The semi that transports The Wall That Heals needs escorts in South Dakota.

## Veteran Cyclists Needed to Escort The Wall That Heals

Do you ride? We need you! **The Wall That Heals** will be escorted from Mitchell to Chamberlain by veteran cyclists. We'll meet in the south parking lot at Cabela's in Mitchell at 9:00am Wednesday, August 9 with a briefing at 9:45am. The ride begins at 10:00am and will follow a route along Old US Highway 16. We'll arrive at the rest area in Chamberlain at about 11:30am. For more information, contact Fritz Miller at [Fritz.Miller@sdpb.org](mailto:Fritz.Miller@sdpb.org) or 605-677-6455.

### JOIN SDPB AND A VARIETY OF SPECIAL GUESTS FOR SPECIAL SCREENINGS OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE VIETNAM WAR.

**AUGUST 10, NOON** - STATE THEATRE, CHAMBERLAIN

**AUGUST 17, 7:00PM** - RAMKOTA, PIERRE

**AUGUST 23 6:00PM** - CAPITOL THEATRE, ABERDEEN

**AUGUST 25, 11:00AM** - ROSEBUD SIOUX VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAM BUILDING, ROSEBUD

**AUGUST 29, NOON** - AMERICAN LEGION, WATERTOWN

**SEPT. 6, 6:00PM** - SDPB BLACK HILLS BUREAU, RAPID CITY

**SEPT. 7, 7:00PM** - GRANT COUNTY LIBRARY, MILBANK

**SEPT. 12, 7:00PM** - EDITH B. SIEGRIST PUBLIC LIBRARY, VERMILLION

**SEPT. 23, 5:30PM** - DEADWOOD MOUNTAIN GRAND, DEADWOOD



## SDPB Needs You

SDPB needs your assistance. **The Wall That Heals** is open to the public 24-hours-a-day from August 9 at 8pm through August 13 at 4pm. SDPB needs volunteers to offer visitor assistance at The Wall. You do not need to be a veteran or have any special knowledge of the Vietnam War or The Wall – training and materials will be provided. If you have time to spare any time of day or night, please call our project's volunteer coordinator: Ann Thiel 605-234-6049 or email [lilgto@midstatesd.net](mailto:lilgto@midstatesd.net).

## VA ANNOUNCES PLAN TO DISPOSE OF OR RE-USE ALL OF ITS VACANT BUILDINGS IN 24-MONTHS

Following through on a key promise from less than a month ago, United States Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin announced a plan to dispose of all vacant VA buildings in 24 months (either by demolishing or setting for reuse).

Dr. Shulkin had raised the vacant building issue as a priority in his "State of the VA" address delivered at the White House on May 31.

Nationwide, the VA currently has 430 vacant or mostly vacant buildings that are on average more than 60 years old, and cost taxpayers more than \$7 million per year to maintain.

Dr. Shulkin announced that, of those 430 buildings, the VA has begun disposal or reuse processes on 71. Of the remaining 359 buildings, Dr. Shulkin announced the VA will begin disposal or reuse processes on another 71 in the next six months, and plans to initiate disposal of the final 288 vacant buildings within 24 months.

"We owe it to the American taxpayer to apply as much of our funding as possible to helping Veterans," said Dr. Shulkin. "Maintaining vacant buildings, including close to 100 from the Revolutionary War and Civil War, makes no sense and we're working as quickly as possible to get them out of our inventory."

The Secretary also announced that the VA will review another 784 non-vacant, but underutilized, buildings to determine if additional efficiencies can be identified to be reinvested in veterans' services.

Finally, in addition to the building closure, Dr. Shulkin announced that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is freezing its footprint and will maximize space management by leasing or eliminating office space nationwide, thanks to a robust telework program and the digitization of claim files. The VA estimates these actions will save taxpayers an additional \$15.7 million annually beginning in 2017, for a total of close to \$23 million in combined annual savings from the initiatives.

"As I said in my State of the VA presentation, we need to move rapidly to bring savings to taxpayers," said Dr. Shulkin. "We will work through the legal requirements and regulations for disposal and reuse and we will do it as swiftly as possible."

## NEW ARTWORK DECORATES THE HALLS OF THE STATE VETERANS HOME

The Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, in partnership with the South Dakota Arts Council, is in the process of decorating the halls of the home via the Artists in Residence Program.

The first wall has been decorated with a tree of hands, each representing the veterans and employees of the home.





## TRAIL OF GOVERNORS UNVEILS STATUES OF TWO FORMER SD GUARDSMEN GOVERNORS



Gov. Leslie Jensen

Statues of two former South Dakota National Guardsmen, who also served as governors, were unveiled as part of the state's Trail of Governors, in Pierre, June 16.

The Trail of Governors, which began unveiling bronze statues of South Dakota governors in 2012, unveiled four more at this year's ceremony inside the Capitol that included Leslie Jensen and Joe Foss, the 15th and 20th governors respectively.

"I'm very proud of the men and women of the South Dakota National Guard - who put their lives on the line overseas and do so much to serve us at home," Gov. Dennis Daugaard said before sculptors unveiled the statues. "We have National Guard Soldiers and Airmen



Gov. Joe Foss

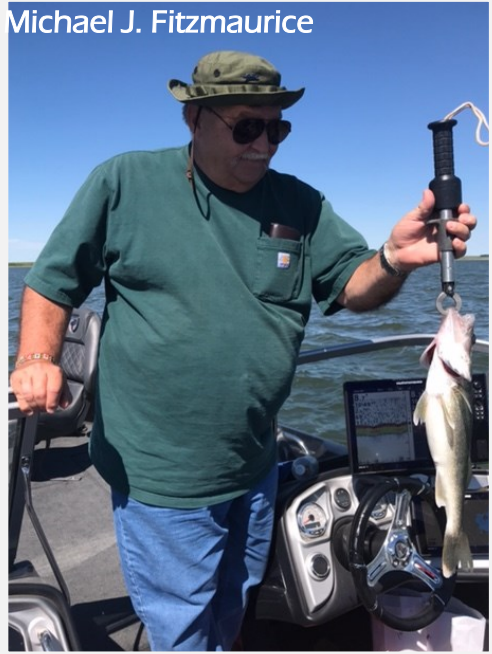
from South Dakota deployed today as we sit here in this rotunda. I'd like to think that these two statues will pay tribute not only to those two governors but all the men and women who served in our South Dakota National Guard."

Foss' and Jensen's statues can be viewed at the South Dakota National Guard Museum in Pierre through August when they will be placed on Capitol Avenue. Jensen will be placed near the Soldiers and Sailors War Memorial building and Foss will be placed near the Joe Foss State Office Building.

You can learn more about the Trail of Governors at: <https://www.trailofgovernors.com/>. The trail route can be found at: <https://www.trailofgovernors.com/trail-route/>.

## IF THE KEYS ARE MISSING—I'VE GONE FISHING!

Michael J. Fitzmaurice



Monday, veterans from all eras in South Dakota had the opportunity to participate in the “Warriors Never Give Up” fishing tournament near Watertown.

SDDVA Field Officer Will Huffman had the opportunity to fish with Medal of Honor recipient Michael J. Fitzmaurice and pro-angler/outdoor TV host Darin Lewin. As you can see, I think their team held their own—they placed 8th in the tournament!

Huffman shared that the most memorable part of the day was when 92 year old World War II Veteran Ordell (Purple Heart recipient) caught the largest fish of the day (28 inch walleye)!

Huffman addressed the veterans during the closing ceremony of the event. His message focused on the fact that veterans are inspired by other veterans and the need to carry on the tradition. He encouraged his fellow veterans to help inspire the next generation to serve.

Huffman closed his remarks by saying, “It was a privilege and an honor to be here today and fish with these warri-

ors. It serves as a reminder that we

are blessed with heroes in our lives every day.”

Warriors Never Give Up, organizes outdoors events for our heroes and provide a place of relaxation, hope, revival, and a break from life’s daily struggles. For more information on this program — check out their site:

[https://warriorsnevergiveup.org/..](https://warriorsnevergiveup.org/)



Will Huffman

Ordell and his great catch!



MtnManPhotography



## SUMMER FUN AT THE STATE VETERANS HOME

Veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home don't sit idle much. Activities the past week included participation in the Flag Day ceremony, a trip to Deadwood and some fast draw shooting, and some fishing and pontoon rides at Angostura Lake.



## GOOD REASON TO BE PROUD OF THE SDNG

### (A COLUMN BY GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD)

If you live out west or near Chamberlain, you may have noticed more individuals in uniform over the last week. That's because the South Dakota National Guard is currently in the middle of its annual Golden Coyote training exercise. In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year, the exercise is held to prepare military members for overseas contingency operations and homeland defense.

Thirty military units with soldiers from 13 states, one U.S. territory and four foreign countries are participating in the two-week training. The 2,400 service members who are involved serve in the Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as the National Guard.

Through the exercise, the SDNG is providing service to the public. For the tenth year in a row, the National Guard and reserve soldiers are conducting a timber haul humanitarian mission. They are using hydraulic excavators to load timber onto trucks for delivery to members of the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River and Crow Creek tribes. This not only provides tribes with wood to use for heating, but gives soldiers experience in finding and delivering supplies – a job soldiers routinely perform overseas.

I am proud of the South Dakota National Guard for leading this successful operation each year, and also for continuously distinguishing itself.

I recently received word that South Dakota is leading the country in unit readiness. The National Guard Bureau annually designates "Superior Units" based upon personnel strength, meeting high training requirements and receiving excellent marks during inspections. This year, only 35 Army National Guard units in the nation earned this distinction: two from Iowa, 10 from Virginia and 23 from South Dakota. In total, the SDNG makes up nine-tenths of a percent of the nation's Army National Guard. Yet, our units earned 66 percent of the Superior Unit Awards for training year 2016 – a truly incredible accomplishment.

And that's not all. The SD Army National Guard was recently named the overall winner of the Army Communities of Excellence competition. This award recognizes performance excellence within U.S. Army, National Guard and Reserve installations and communities and their approach to systems management. After finishing runner-up last year, they outdid every other state in the nation this year, bringing home \$100,000 to push organizational excellence even higher.

We have good reason to be proud of our soldiers and airmen. For over 155 years, this leading force has been dedicated to serving the citizens of South Dakota and the nation. They are among the most dedicated, capable, and reliable men and women I've ever known.





# Upcoming Events

Jun 28—Black Hills Veterans Job Fair—Western Dakota Tech

June 30—Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe's 3rd Annual Bataan Death Memorial March (starts at BIA 700 South and ends at Pow Wow Arena) - 7:30 am (CT)

Jul 3-4—State offices will be closed

Jul 14—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Building 145—Room 108—Fort Meade—10:00 am (MT)

Jul 22—PVA 3rd Annual Poker Run—Thirsty Duck Bar and Grill—945 S. Marion Rd.—Sioux Falls— 11:00 am (CT)

Aug 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota

Aug 31—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Phone: 605-773-8242

E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

